

*Washington, DC* – Today the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment, at the request of U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19), held a special Field Hearing in East Fishkill to examine water pollution and cleanup in New York's Hudson Valley. U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), the Chairwoman of the Subcommittee, and U.S. Rep. John Boozman (R-AK), the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, joined Congressman Hall at the Field Hearing this morning at the East Fishkill Town Hall to hear firsthand about the significant impact that pollution from Superfund sites is continuing to have on communities in the Hudson Valley.

"The Hudson Valley has serious and ongoing water contamination issues," explained Congressman Hall.

"The area has been significantly affected by pollution that presents a real threat to drinking water, public health and the environment. The impact of this pollution has been felt by too many communities. As the Hudson Valley grows, we must be sure to protect one of our most precious resources: water."

The Hopewell Precision Superfund site, located in East Fishkill, is one of five active sites in New York's 19th Congressional District on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Superfund National Priority List, a designation of the nation's most severely polluted locations. The Hopewell Junction community has been hit particularly hard by groundwater contamination and vapor intrusion by the carcinogenic chemical trichloroethylene (TCE). During the late 1970s, the Hopewell Precision Plant dumped painting and degreasing wastes directly on the ground, which resulted in a 1.5 mile long groundwater contamination plume. Chemicals have been detected in local drinking water wells and many homes have experienced significant problems caused by vapor intrusion. People in Hopewell Junction have suffered from cancer and other health problems due to TCE. Last month Congressman Hall and Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY22) introduced the TCE Reduction Act, legislation which would require the EPA to set stricter regulations to protect the public from exposure to TCE.

"Some people are vocal and some are not, but we all know that if our homes had been protected sooner, perhaps some of our neighbors and loved ones would still be here with us," testified Debra Hall, Founder of Hopewell Junction Citizens for Clean Water. "Although the government knew about the possible danger, residents were never informed."

A large stretch of the Hudson River has also been designated a Superfund site as a result of the GE Company dumping PCBs directly into the river, and this resulted in serious downriver impacts in New York's 19th Congressional District. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has spearheaded the PCB cleanup project.

"Water pollution in the Hudson Valley is a serious challenge and the cleanup is going to require strong and organized cooperation," said Congressman Hall. "I brought the Water Resources Subcommittee here to spur the federal government to redouble its commitment to remediation in the Hudson Valley as well as to the Superfund program on the national level."

-30-